

In the Claims:

Cancel claim 29 without estoppel or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof and amend claims 17 and 18, as follows:

1.-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for performing a surgical procedure on the heart of a patient through a working cavity in tissue between the heart and an entry incision, the apparatus comprising:

a cannula configured for passing extravascularly through the entry incision and working cavity toward the heart;

a suction attachment supported by the cannula and configured for contacting an exterior target site on the heart; and

a support channel for a cardiac lead that is disposed on the suction attachment and that includes coaxial mating segments that are relatively rotatable about a coaxial axis thereof, each segment having a longitudinal slot extending between distal and proximal ends thereof of the segment for selective configuration as a closed channel in one relative rotational orientation for confining a cardiac lead therein in the support channel or as a channel open longitudinally between proximal and distal ends thereof of the segment in another relative rotational orientation of the segments that aligns the longitudinal slots for releasing a cardiac lead laterally therefrom from within the support channel through the aligned slots.

18. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to claim 17 including a cardiac lead connected to an electrode disposed near a surface of the suction attachment to contact the heart externally, the cardiac lead extending along the support channel in the closed configuration to the proximal ~~end thereof~~ ends of the segments for connecting the electrode to a utilization circuit and being releasable laterally from the support channel through the longitudinal slot formed ~~therein~~ in the segments as rotationally oriented in the open configuration.

19.-29. (Cancelled)